

September 17, 2023  
"ORDINARY" TIME

**Greeting**

**Welcome Statement** (Printed on the bulletin insert)

**Silence** ...a time to breathe...

**Prelude and Bringing in the Light**

\* **Call to Worship** (Adapted from Psalm 28)

*Leader:* To you, O Lord, I call;  
my rock, do not refuse to hear me,  
for if you are silent to me,  
I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.

*People:* **Blessed be the Lord,  
for he has heard the sound of our pleadings.  
The Lord is our strength and shield;  
in God our hearts trust;  
so we are helped, and our hearts exult,  
and with song we give thanks to God.**

*Leader:* The Lord is the strength of God's people;  
God is the saving refuge of the anointed.  
Save your people, and bless your heritage;  
be their shepherd, and carry them for ever. Amen.

\* **1st Hymn** *Just As I Am* (NCH #207)

• **Morning Prayer (Unison)**

Still Speaking God, our world is so full of noise we sometimes cannot hear your voice. Political winds of distress blow us about with hurricane force. We are anxious, and we live as people burdened with our fear. Forgive our discouragement. Encourage us to hope. Surround us with your peace. Help us live large out of the gospel story that claims us and calls us to be your people in these very times. We pray, as always, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

\* **Assurance:** *There is no wrong you can confess...*

***Thanks be to God!***

\* **Sung Response**

*Breathe on me breath of God; fill me with life anew  
That I may love the what you do love, and do what you would do.*

**Announcements**

**Offering**

**Offertory**

• **Sung Response** *Praise God from whom all blessings flow...*

• **Gratitude Prayer (Unison)**

Holy One, we bring what we have and who we are and offer it all in love for the world you have created and the people you have redeemed. In great gratitude we give our thanks. Amen.

*First Church Choir Anthem*

**Kid's Time**

**1st Scripture Reading** **Matthew 18:21-35**

**2nd Scripture Reading** **Romans 14:1-12**

**Sermon**

**Invitation to the Table** *Here, O My Lord* (NCH #336 vs 1-3)  
*If you're hungry, or even just curious, please come and eat.*

**Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer**

• **Closing Hymn** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (NCH #43)

• **Benediction** May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your land;  
the snow fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,  
may God hold you in the hollow of God's hand.  
(traditional Gaelic blessing)

• **Postlude**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Liturgist:** Sherri Roberts

**If you would like to sponsor** a radio broadcast call the church office at 608-643-8387 to check on available dates. Cost is now at \$90.00/week. Your support of this important ministry is much appreciated.

**Address Changes**—If your phone number, mailing or email address changes please send the new address to the church office so we can keep our records up to date.

**The Communion table at this church** is open to everybody—whether you believe, want to believe or can't believe as we do you are welcome to your share the bread and juice at Jesus' table. Whoever you are, whatever brought you here, however you identify, whoever you love, whatever your circumstances, whether you are hungry or just curious, Jesus himself invites you to this table.

**Friends of the earth**—you might want to check out this symposium offered by the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway on the science, culture and history of the Lower Wisconsin River Basin. Check out the poster on the board near the entry doors or email [jean.unmuth@gmail.com](mailto:jean.unmuth@gmail.com) for more information.

**From Members in Ministry**—if you know someone who would benefit from a visit or phone call, or who would like to receive Communion in their home, please let Debbie Tschudy know. Call her at: (608) 963-4873.

**From our Stock the Schools campaign—suggested donations for September:** *Food items:* Individual packages of crackers (Goldfish, Ritz, etc). Please drop your donations off in the red tote outside the educational doors during office hours (Monday—Friday, 8am–Noon) or inside during Sunday worship. Thanks for your help.

### First UCC Welcome Statement:

*“Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”*  
*Romans 15:7*

We at First United Church of Christ—Sauk City have been embraced by the inclusive love of Jesus, and so we strive, as an Open and Affirming congregation, to be a welcoming presence in Sauk City and

beyond. We invite anyone and everyone to worship and serve with us. *Everyone*—without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race, or faith background, who covenants with us to “do justice, love kindness and walk humbly” in the way of Jesus will be a valued member of this fellowship.

**The goal** of Child Protective Services is to support parents and caregivers in making necessary changes so children are safe and protected in their homes. Below is a wish list of items they need to fulfill their mission. You can put your donations in the basket in the foyer. Thank You.

**“Joyful Gifts”**

*Children are our hope, our joy, our future.  
Every child is a story yet to be told.*

**Sauk County CPS Wish List of items frequently needed:**

**Household safety devices:**

- Baby Gates
- Door/Window Alarms
- Cabinet Locks
- Outlet Covers
- Corner Protectors
- Baby Monitors

**Diapering Supplies:**

- Diapers (Sizes 2 & 3)
- Pull-Ups (Sizes 4 & 5)
- Baby Wipes

Convertible Car Seats  
Portable Playard/Playpen

**Monetary gifts are accepted**

We invite you to fill the basket with these new or gently used items.

This project is in conjunction with  
Sauk County Child Protective Services (CPS)

*Thank you for your participation!*

**First Scripture Reading:****Matthew 18:21-35**

Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.’

‘For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.” And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, “Pay what you owe.” Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you.” But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, “You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?” And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.’

**Second Scripture Reading:****Romans 14:1-12**

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. For it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.’ So then, each of us will be accountable to God.